

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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KUZMAN OUTLINES NEW STATE LAWS TAKING EFFECT ON JULY 1

INDIANAPOLIS – Several initiatives designed to protect children, stronger efforts to stop the production of meth and increased speed limits are among the new state laws scheduled to take effect on July 1, according to State Rep. Bob Kuzman (D-Crown Point).

"July 1 generally serves as the date when many of the bills approved by the Indiana General Assembly become law," Kuzman said. "Of course, most of the public's attention is focused on the biennial state budget that takes effect on that date. That is particularly true in 2005, since the new budget underfunds public education, which will cause teacher layoffs, larger class sizes and property tax increases for homeowners."

One new law approved by the 2004 Legislature that takes effect July 1 will require children ages 4 through 7 to sit in booster seats and be restrained by lap and shoulder belts while riding in cars. Violators can be fined \$25, but that penalty may be waived if they prove they've purchased a booster seat within 30 days of the infraction.

"On the same date, either the driver or the passenger may be cited for having an open container of alcohol in a car, with violations leading to fines of up to \$500," Kuzman noted.

"After July 1, the speed limits on some rural stretches of interstate highways can increase to 70 miles per hour for automobiles and 65 mph for trucks, while speed limits on divided four-lane highways can increase to 60 mph," he continued. "It is important to remember that these changes will be put in place after the state completes safety reviews of the roadways in question. New signs should go up on affected interstates after the July 4 holiday, while the changes for divided four-lane highways will take a little longer."

The next step in statewide efforts to stop the production and use of meth will be restricting the sale of cold medicines that contain ingredients used to make the drug. These medications will be stored in a locked display case or placed behind a counter, with some exceptions for stores with pharmacies. To buy the cold medications, customers would have to be 18 years of age or older and show a photo ID.

"Voters should be aware that photo identification also will be required in order to vote, starting on July 1," Kuzman said. "In order to cast a ballot on Election Day, you will have to show a driver's license or another type of government-issued photo ID."

Trial court judges and full-time prosecutors across Indiana will be getting pay increases of more than 20 percent that will be financed through new court fees. To pay for their raises, Kuzman said an additional \$15 will be collected for each civil filing, juvenile case, felony and misdemeanor conviction, infraction and ordinance violation action in trial court and city and town court. A \$10 fee increase also will be assessed for each small claims case in state, city and town courts.

"Each legislative session sees approval of new penalties and adding tougher penalties against crimes already on the books," Kuzman said. "It will be against the law to commit insurance fraud and operate an Internet Web site that engages in unlawful or professional gambling."

"Several new laws impact those who prey on our children," he continued. "The state will have the option of seeking life in prison without parole for any person found to be a repeat offender of a felony sex offense against a child. Any person

who has a second conviction for possession of child pornography will be required to register as a sex offender. Neighborhood associations will join the groups and entities that receive the sex and violent offender directory."

Another noteworthy law coming on the books July 1 will require all felons to provide DNA samples for a state data base. The Indiana Department of Correction will be able to establish a system designed to notify victims of crime whenever a committed offender's status changes or if that person has escaped or been released.

"An offender on home detention can be ordered to wear a monitoring device that can reliably determine the person's location," Kuzman said. "Monitoring devices will be able to record an offender's location 24 hours a day, track where the person has been, and notify law enforcement if the offender violates a detention order."

Several new laws will affect the education of our children. Schools will be required to adopt rules to prohibit bullying. The State Board of Education will be required to develop standards and guidelines on cheerleading safety in schools. Students will have a daily chance to voluntarily recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a daily moment of silence. The State Department of Health will be required to adopt guidelines to protect children during blizzards, tornadoes, extreme heat and other types of severe weather.

Other new laws noted by Kuzman prohibit employers from disciplining any employee who misses work because of service as a volunteer firefighter or EMT; give Indiana University the authority to establish an adult stem cell research center; and require state agencies that intend to adopt a rule to impose requirements or costs on a small business to prepare an economic impact statement for that rule, and seek alternatives that reduce the financial impact on businesses.

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